Saskatchewan
Tourism and
Small Business

Planning, Organizing and Evaluating an Event in Saskatchewan

Minister's Message

How Important are Saskatchewan Events?

Throughout our province's history, people have gathered at events that have become a significant characteristic of Saskatchewan's lifestyle.

Many times during the year, dedicated volunteers across the province organize events that have tremendous potential for benefiting all of our citizens, socially, culturally and economically. Whether big or small, the most successful events require skillful planning, strong organizational support and a business-like approach.

The Department of Tourism and Small Business has prepared this guide to help you plan, organize, evaluate and carry out your event. It is our aim, with the assistance of this guide, to help you achieve your goals and add to the benefits that many of our events are presently achieving. We must keep in mind that events can lead to increased revenues for our communities, support for local providers of goods and services, job opportunities and general long-term social and economic impact. Events also play a prominent role in developing Saskatchewan's enormous tourism potential.

When it comes to volunteering their time and energy, Saskatchewan people are second to none. Our reputation has been proven time and time again, and I would like to thank the tens of thousands of volunteers who contribute to the success of our Saskatchewan events. I encourage all of you to keep up this valuable work which reflects our development and stature as a province and as a people.

Paul Schoenhals
Minister
Tourism and Small Business

Table of Contents

Page

Introduction 1

Chapter One
A Background to Events 2

Chapter Two
The Initial Planning Stages 7

Chapter Three
Detailed Planning, Preparation, and Organization of the Event 13

Chapter Four
Evaluation of the Event and Preparation for the Next Occasion 22

Chapter Five
Summary 23

Recommended Readings and Other Sources 24

Introduction

This handbook provides an overview of how to plan, organize, and evaluate a special event in Saskatchewan. It is intended to assist communities, organizations, and individuals engaged in these tasks.

As an overview, the information in this booklet cannot cover all topics in a comprehensive manner. For further assistance on any specific topic or task, the reader should contact Saskatchewan Tourism and Small Business or Saskatchewan Culture and Recreation. The latter has published a series of information modules and assists in conducting workshops on various aspects of the topics contained in the modules.

Immediately following this introduction, the next chapter provides a background into events in general; the nature of events in Saskatchewan; and the importance of events to sponsoring groups, communities hosting events, and the province.

After Chapter Two, the booklet outlines the main steps in planning, organizing, and evaluating an event.

While reviewing this handbook, the reader will note that as stated at the outset above, the information contained is an overview. Considerable effort and responsibility will be required of the reader to apply the information offered in this booklet to his/her plans for a specific event.

Chapter One

A Background to Events

Prior to any serious planning or other detailed consideration of an event individuals, organizations and communities should be aware of some of the differences and similarities of events, the nature of events generally held in Saskatchewan, and some of the benefits that events in this province can have for organizations, communities, and the province as a whole. With this background, groups can be better prepared in developing an event that could become a success for them as well as adding to the calendar of events held in the province.

Events in General

Events can vary considerably from one another. Some may be major events attracting large numbers of guests from beyond the province. Others may be local events, attended primarily by residents from a small region or community.

Some events may be held periodically (once every two to four years); others may be held annually; and still others may be held more than once annually, or may be one-time events (i.e. 100th anniversary, etc.).

Some events require large amounts of capital investment and a complex organizational structure to plan them; others may require only a small capital outlay and a basic organizational structure.

Whatever the size, frequency with which they are held, or cost of events, they all share certain common elements. They begin with an idea; the idea is developed through planning; an organizational structure is required to ensure that an event is held according to plan; a budget needs to be estimated (and funds raised); and certain facilities or services are needed to support them (i.e. pavilions, transportation, waste collection, etc.).

Because of the foregoing, events should be planned and organized in a business-like fashion using good management principles.

Saskatchewan Events and Their Nature

Events have always been a prominent part of Saskatchewan's culture and history. There are over 200 events held in Saskatchewan each year. Some of these have been in existence for over 100 years.

Many of the province's events are historically associated with community life. They form a significant characteristic of Saskatchewan's lifestyle getting people together for jamborees, rodeos and annual sports days, fairs, and homecomings.

Events in the province are often a common focus around which communities and service clubs organize themselves. Saskatchewan's communities have shown an extraordinary ability to organize and successfully develop events, and the province is noted as having one of the highest per capita of volunteers in Canada.

The province as a whole has established an excellent reputation as a hosting province. This extends to such well-known international events as the Silver Broom as well as many national and smaller local events. Saskatchewan's events range widely in size attracting anywhere from 300 to over 200,000 persons. The average attendance is approximately 9,000. However, this is as a result of 22 events having an attendance of over 20,000 and accounting for almost 75% of the total attendance for all events. Therefore, most events in the province have an attendance of less than the actual average of 9,000.

Generally, events in Saskatchewan can be grouped into eight categories according to their themes. These categories are as follows:

Category	Examples of Events and Types
1. Festival	Folk, Music, Ethnic Events
2. Rodeos	Horse Shows, Horse Racing and Rodeos
3. Arts and Crafts	Handcrafts and Hobby Shows
4. Native	Pow Wows
5. Fairs	Annual Fairs and Exhibitions
6. Sports	Curling Bonspiels, Hockey Tournaments, and Skiing/Skating Competitions
7. Novelty	Unique Events (Bath Tub Races and Chicken Chariot Races)
8. Themed	Mexabition, Agribition, Farm Progress Show and Air Show

Events may fit more than one of the above categories, but are usually grouped according to the emphasis of the themes around which they are focussed.

The Importance of Events to Sponsoring Organizations, Hosting Communities, and the Province

Events are important to various groups for a number of reasons. In some cases, they can provide a means for raising money. In certain other cases, they provide an opportunity for individuals, teams and organizations to compete. In still other cases, they can attract participants for other reasons; provide a means to promote community pride, heritage and interaction with other groups; or sell goods.

Depending upon the nature of events and the benefits derived from them, various groups will often support them and actively participate in some aspect leading up to or including a part of the event. The following outlines the importance of events to sponsoring organizations, hosting communities and the province, and why various groups support events.

Sponsoring Organizations

Sponsoring organizations play a key role in many events. They may be a major contributor to the planning, organization, or financial support required for the event. They become involved with events largely because of the opportunities that events provide in generating revenue, offering a market vehicle for an organization's products, promoting the aims or objectives of an organization, or expressing a particular organization's cultural heritage.

To Generate Revenue

Although events can involve a large risk, they can also provide a means for generating considerable revenue that may be required by an organization. If planned well, many events can be held using donated or loaned facilities or equipment, donated funds and volunteer labour. These factors can greatly reduce costs normally incurred by the organization holding the events.

In addition, one study has indicated that those attending the more popular events spend an average of $24.72 per person. Certain events may or may not achieve this level of expenditure. Examples of common expenditures by visitors can include the following:

- admission fees
- food/beverage sales
- souvenirs and programmes
- raffles and lottery tickets
- entertainment

To Provide a Market and Sales Vehicle

Although craft festivals and agricultural shows are very different events, they provide a common opportunity to show, display and sell products. For example, craft festivals such as Wintergreen and the Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival at Battleford, provide special sales outlets for Saskatchewan's handcraft producers. Western Canadian Agribition provides an important show and sales market for livestock producers. These events and others such as the Western Farm Progress Show and Saskatoon's Fall Fair are organized and held on the principle of bringing buyers and sellers together in a special marketplace.

To Promote the Aims and Objectives of the Sponsoring Body

Organized sports events provide an opportunity whereby various amateur and professional sports organizations can achieve greater interest and recognition for their sports.

Many sporting organizations in Saskatchewan strive to host tournaments, championships, and bonspiels. These may be regional or national and lead to a greater recognition, and increased commitment for the sport's development. In some cases, the development has been in the form of new permanent facilities; in other cases it has been in the form of greater public support, stronger organizations, or better competitors.

To Provide an Opportunity to Express a Cultural Heritage

Cultural festivals such as Mosaic and Folkfest, for example, provide an opportunity for various cultural groups to achieve greater recognition. They also provide an opportunity for these groups, as well as the province as a whole, to express unique features of their cultural heritage.

Money raised at cultural festivals can help expand the resources of these cultural groups. This can enable them to continue and possibly expand expressions of their culture.

This illustrates how a variety of sponsoring agencies can benefit from various types of events. Any particular organization's involvement may be for a number of the reasons outlined.

Host Communities

Many communities encourage the development of events largely because of the anticipated increased business brought in from out-of-town visitors. Previous studies of some of Saskatchewan's more significant events have indicated that for $1.00 spent at an event, $6.00 are spent in the community. Other, less significant events will likely not achieve this high a figure but will nevertheless achieve some additional expenditure in the community.

Communities are also interested in the civic pride that many events can promote. Special events not only provide opportunities for the organizers and participants to get together, but they also provide an opportunity for the entire community to interact and get together.

The Province and Saskatchewan Tourism

Events can play an important role in stimulating travel by Saskatchewan residents and in attracting out-of-province residents. They can be some of the province's strongest travel generators.

The potential economic benefits of events to sponsoring organizations and hosting communities have already been indicated. Economic benefits to the entire province may occur as a result of expenditures made by those travelling to events, and possible tax revenues resulting from those expenditures. Compositely, travel expenditures and increased tax revenues generated by Saskatchewan events form an important part of the province's tourism industry.

Events are also an important part of Saskatchewan's culture. Events best exemplify Saskatchewan's spirit of community cooperation and organization. These are very much a part of the province's cultural heritage.

In summary, considerable social and economic benefit is received from events by those sponsoring them, the communities hosting them, and the rest of the province. Groups actively get involved in some aspect of the planning, organizing or holding of special events as a result of recognizing their value.

Chapter Two

The Initial Planning Stages

Most Saskatchewan events are planned and organized by non-profit organizations. These organizations may be communities, cultural organizations, exhibition boards, societies, industry associations, sporting associations, or other similar groups.

To be successful, events of any magnitude must be well planned and organized. This will require a good organization, enthusiastic support, and a business-like approach throughout the planning process. The following provides an overview of the steps that organizations should consider in planning a new event.

The Initiation of an Idea

An idea for a special event could come from a range of ideas and discussions of a large group meeting within a community held specifically to develop an idea for an event. However, more frequently, an idea springs from a meeting involving a small interest group or other special community organization meeting for another purpose. Examples of other purposes could include some of the things outlined previously on pages four and five of this guide (i.e. generate revenue, sales vehicle, etc.).

Regardless of how the idea is first brought out, it will need to be developed further, before getting into any major planning or organizational tasks; and prior to making any serious commitments.

The initial development of the idea should include some clarification of the support organization's capabilities to organize the event, the objectives of the event, possible theme(s), and the potential success of the event (such as identification of the potential market, facility requirements, and costs and revenues). A committee could be formed for the purpose of further development of the idea and an initial assessment of its potential as a community or specific organization's effort.

The committee could also consider at this stage, a possible theme or themes for the event. Further definition and serious development of a theme, however, should be established later.

The Evaluation of Organizational Support

All successful events result from well-managed organizations. The time frame involved from the idea stage through to the holding of the actual event could be as long as two years. During this time, the financial commitment may be considerable. Suppliers (e.g. of facilities, entertainment, concessions and other requirements) will need to be assured that they will be paid. Numerous others aspects of the event will have to be planned and managed in great detail. All of these will require a strong organization with business-like decision-making skills.

The committee responsible for developing the "idea" should therefore address the following questions.

Is there a strong organization that can support the event?

If there is support from a strong organization, is the organization fully capable of undertaking the entire planning and development of the event or is outside assistance required (and available)?

If the organization supporting the event is already encountering difficulties (financial, organizational or otherwise), the development of an event may only make these problems worse. **Therefore, the organization should be honestly evaluated in terms of its financial, organizational and planning capabilities. Its enthusiasm for the event will not be enough to carry it out successfully.**

Establishment and Priorization of Objectives

Once the initial objectives have been developed, and it has been determined that the idea has both merit and support, further development and priorization of the objectives will be required. This is undertaken for a number of reasons.

As the idea becomes more complete, additional objectives may be added to the original list. The expanded list may contain some objectives that are not compatible with others or the objectives of the support organization. Further, the new list may be too large to be realistically achievable.

A clear priorized list of objectives at this stage will be valuable later when the event has been held and its success is to be evaluated.

Objectives that are commonly set for events are listed below. They largely stem from the importance and benefits of events, as previously outlined in Chapter One of this booklet.

- **To raise money for an organization**
- **To create and promote greater public awareness of the organization, its aims, objectives and members.**
- **To increase commitment to and membership in the supporting organization.**
- **To provide a market to show, demonstrate, and sell commodities, goods and services.**
- **To commemorate or celebrate community heritage and culture.**
- **To improve tourism for the community, region, or province.**
- **To provide for an improved level of participant competition.**
- **To provide an opportunity for performing artists to "showcase" their talents.**

The Establishment of a Theme

The theme for an event can more easily be established, once the objectives have been listed and priorized. While some consideration of a theme has most often already occurred with the initial idea, its compatibility with the objectives and support group should be checked and assessed. For example, if one of the key objectives is to provide a sales opportunity for crafts people, then the theme of a crafts fair for buyers and sellers to come together would be appropriate.

Ideally, the theme should be unique, providing the event with its own distinctive quality. **There are many cases where new events have followed themes from other events and have not succeeded because of competition from the original events.**

Wherever appropriate, the theme should also portray or be strongly associated with the area of community in which it is held. In this way, the area and the event serve to promote one another through a natural feature, legend, heritage, attraction or other feature.

Most events will rely heavily on the local market. **During the initial years, it is usual for many events to have 75% of their attendance drawn from the local area.** As these events grow, the reliance on this local market diminishes. Regardless, events with a theme associated with the area will generally be better supported in both the long- and short-term.

Introduction of the Event to the Entire Organization and Community

If the committee has determined that the idea has some merit, it should be introduced to the organization's general membership, or the community as a whole. This will provide a measure of consensus and enthusiasm for the project, as well as provide additional thoughts on how the idea could be further developed. It will be important for the idea to receive wide support from within the organization and/or the community at large.

In addition to giving an indication of support for the idea, potential resources, volunteers, facilities, and alternative methods of organizing the event should be identified. Additional objectives may also be identified, again requiring priorization of work.

Determination of the Event's Feasibility

After a general meeting, the planning committee should assess the feasibility of the event and estimate the attendance that can realistically be expected. This will involve a critical review of the market appeal, locally, regionally, and beyond for the event.

To estimate expected attendance the committee should identify what the experience of similar kinds of events has been in the community, Saskatchewan, and elsewhere. Talks with other groups who have had experience in or have a knowledge of similar kinds of events could help to determine the reasons for their success or failure. This will also provide an opportunity to benefit from the experience of other events.

Estimated attendance is the basis for estimating revenues, costs, and more detailed information on facility and budget requirements. Attendance estimates should therefore be cautious, and thoroughly researched. Presentation of the feasibility of the events could be undertaken as part of a statement definition of the event. This is outlined below.

A Statement Definition of the Event

After arriving at the attendance estimates and preliminary feasibility of the event, a written statement should be prepared, addressing the following topics for the organization. This will summarize and document the steps undertaken to this stage and assist greatly in the next stages of organizing the event.

- **Objective for the Event**
  - What is the reason for the event?
  - What is the event expected to accomplish for:
    - the organization
    - the participants
    - the visitors
    - the community
- **Event Theme or Concept**

  A basic statement regarding the nature of the event or festival. How unique is it? Are there similar kinds of events held in Saskatchewan or Canada? What will be the nature of programming at the event?
- **Target Market for the Event**
  - Who is going to come to the event?
  - Where will attendance be drawn from - local and/or non-local market?
  - Does the event conflict or complement other events held at this time of year?
- **Attendance**
  - Length of the event (one day or five days).
  - Daily and total attendance.
  - Adult/children admission ratios.
  - Projected attendance in future years.
- **Revenue Estimates**
  - Gate/entry admission.
  - Food/beverage sales.
  - Other revenues
    - sponsors
    - grants
- **Cost Estimates**
  - Facility requirements (including on-site and elsewhere in the community).
  - Entertainment
  - Food and beverage costs.
  - Licensing requirements and costs.
  - Advertising.
  - Program printing/distribution costs.
  - Other costs.

Based on this kind of analysis, a decision can then be made whether to proceed or not with the event. The analysis may prove to be a negative one. The management and staging of the event may simply be too much for the organization and/or community to take on. The financial complications or risks may be too great. If this is the case, it is better for your organization to find that out - sooner rather than later.

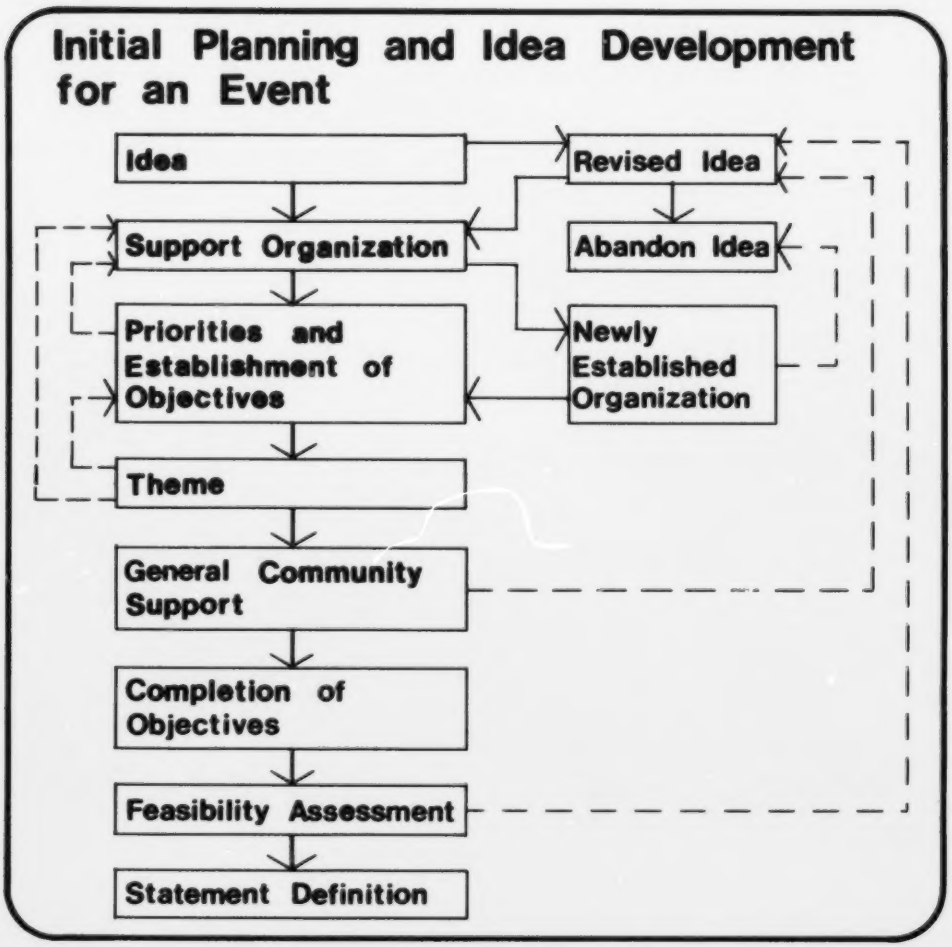
If your evaluation is a positive one, then establish a realistic lead time to allow your organization to plan the details and organize the event. Sufficient time to promote the event will also be an important consideration. You may be surprised at the lead time that is required. Even with established events, planning and organizing for the following year's event almost immediately follows the conclusion of the current year's event. Establish the date for your event and allow up to a year to properly plan and organize it.

To summarize what should be done in the planning and evaluation stage, which precede actual development of the event, here are some of the basic steps to consider:

- **Establish an initial idea that is unique and closely associated with the location and organization behind it.**
- **Evaluate the capabilities of your organization.**
- **Establish objectives for your event.**
- **Establish a theme for the event.**
- **Introduce the event to a broad audience, and seek support.**
- **Establish the event's feasibility.**
- **Establish a statement definition of the event.**
- **Establish a date with sufficient lead time to allow for proper organization and adequate advertising of the event.**

Remember that an event requires planning and preparation. **Without the above, it will likely face difficulties.**

Think and plan carefully before making any major commitments.


Initial Planning and Idea Development for an Event
Idea
Revised Idea
Support Organization
Abandon Idea
Priorities and Establishment of Objectives
Newly Established Organization
Theme
General Community Support
Completion of Objectives
Feasibility Assessment
Statement Definition

Chapter Three

Detailed Planning, Preparation and Organization of the Event

Once the statement defining the event has been completed and the decision to support it has been established, the group behind the idea must then concentrate on the organizing details for the event. Organizing an event is a major undertaking, requiring a number of tasks that have to be addressed, coordinated and managed to considerable detail. Individuals or sub-committees will have to be designated responsibility for ensuring that tasks are fulfilled on time.

Regardless of the type or size of the event, certain tasks are common. These include:

- **Financial Planning**
- **Program/Activity Planning**
- **Marketing and Promotion**
- **Facilities Planning**

In addition to the foregoing list, a separate off-grounds committee may be necessary to establish the appropriate facility; functional and promotional links between the event and the community and local hospitality industry; and transportation requirements. In smaller-scaled events, these linkages could be a part of the specifically expressed tasks of the other committees.

Also, depending on the size and nature of the event, it may be advisable to form a special accommodations committee.

Further detail on the organization requirements and tasks are provided in the following sub-sections of this chapter.

Establishment of an Organizing Committee

An organizing committee or governing body should be quickly established after the idea for the event has been developed. This committee or body could be from within the existing organization (such as a festival or event committee) or from a newly-formed corporate body with its own board and management specifically in charge of the event.

In either of the two foregoing cases, separate records and a separate bank account should be established for the event. It is critical for the event and its future that it be separately managed with its own accounting and record keeping systems.

• Selection of an Event Coordinator

The organizing body should select a person to be in charge of organizing the event. An event coordinator or organizing chairperson may be hired. Alternatively, as most events cannot afford to pay for a coordinator initially, this person may have to be a volunteer. If the event has been established for a number of years, its future expansion may include a hired coordinator.

For those events where the organizers are contemplating a paid coordinator (or other staff), salaries will be an important component of the budget and cash flow estimates. These will be more fully discussed following this sub-section.

Payrolls could be, in part, supported by grants or commercial revenues or sponsorships. Organizations should investigate potential federal and provincial employment programs to determine potential eligibility for funding for paid employees.

Whether a paid employee or a volunteer, the coordinator must be someone who has genuine enthusiasm and support for the project so that this enthusiasm will be spread throughout the entire organization. The coordinator is responsible for organizing all aspects of the event from budgeting, and marketing, to staffing for setting the event up.

If the event is very small, the coordinator may be responsible for all tasks to be performed or in contrast, if it is very large, a number of committees may be formed with a chairperson in charge of each major task.

• Identification and Allocation of Major Tasks

For many events, the number of tasks to be completed is too great for one person to handle. At the outset, key tasks should be identified. These tasks can logically fit into functional areas such as finance, facilities, promotion, specific activities and programs to be undertaken at the event itself.

Depending on the type of event certain tasks may be more important than others. If they are very important, then a committee should be set up to carry out that task. If it is a smaller task, then a sub-committee could be formed to carry out those duties. The event coordinator or organizing chairperson should prepare written assignments for each committee, describing the committees roles, responsibilities and tasks to be undertaken. The committees, in turn, should approach their assignments in a business-like manner.

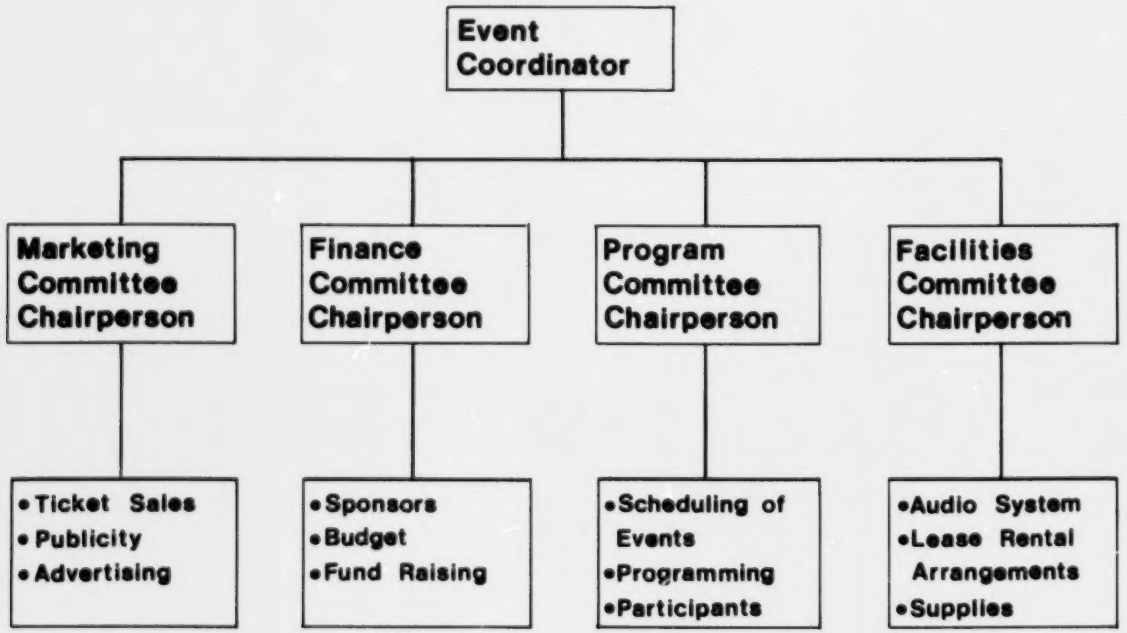
The selection of effective chairpersons is crucial to the success of the event. Each chairperson should be someone who is well known in the community. Also, he/she should be experienced in the committee task for which he/she is responsible.

It is important that chairpersons not be selected only because they have the time, or because they want to help. There will be lots of things for this type of person to do: working at the event, participating on a committee or assisting a chairperson.

The chairperson must be selected for his/her community profile and experience. This type of person will have much more success through "connections" to enlist the support of the community and to raise funds for the project.

Whoever is chosen, it is also important that the person be genuinely enthusiastic about the event. If the chairperson is enthusiastic, he/she will easily be able to pass that enthusiasm on to committee members and volunteers.

Typical Committee Organization Structure for an Event



• Establishment of a Board of Directors and Getting Started

Once the coordinator and the committee chairpersons are selected, they form a "Board of Directors" for the event. This group should meet regularly to discuss plans and problems in organizing the event. Because this group is made up of business people and community leaders, meetings must be kept short and to the point to be effective. Planning and staying with agendas for meetings helps in keeping meetings on time. Many organizations find it best to hold "Breakfast Meetings" at 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., rather than 7:30 p.m. which may then drag on all evening. Whenever meetings are scheduled, it is important to determine a regular time so people can establish a routine.

The development of a planning chart can be a useful tool to ensure that various tasks are not only identified but that they are sequenced properly and eventually get done on time. A "critical path" can be diagrammed to illustrate critical tasks and timing. **A basic planning chart will outline the following:**

- **Start and completion of duties for each task.**
- **A description of the task.**
- **The committee and individuals responsible for initiating and completing the task.**
- **Resources required to complete that task and their cost and availability.**
- **Monitoring procedures to ensure that the coordinator knows when the task is completed.**

• Establishment of Budget Details

One of the most important and useful tools in organizing and managing any event is a budget. Very simply, a budget estimates the revenues and allows the organization to control costs against those estimated revenues. **If a budget is not established, chances are that the project will encounter troubles.** A budget forces an organization to identify all costs associated with conducting an event. In doing so, it greatly assists in setting realistic goals for fund raising and other revenue sources to cover the costs of staging the event. If one of the objectives is to make money for the organization the budget takes on even more importance.

The first step to establishing good budgeting practices is to select as a chairperson for the finance committee someone who is experienced at preparing budgets and has had experience with financial management and accounting principles. The person does not have to be a chartered accountant. Very likely the organization has an accountant that prepares an annual financial report for it. Accountants can be hired to prepare audited statements. Accountants are rarely hired to prepare budgets. What is required is an organized person who can prepare a budget, maintain general financial records and implement financial controls for an event.

Establishing a budgeting and accounting system for the event is not difficult. It is both logical and routine. It requires day-to-day management by a disciplined person. It is not something where a box full of receipts gets pulled out and a periodic attempt to balance a ledger is made - **never get behind in recording revenue and expenditures.** This will make any budgeting system useless.

If paid staff are involved, monthly returns to Revenue Canada will be required for payroll deductions of income tax, unemployment insurance and Canada Pension. Deductions for Workers' Compensation may be involved also. Again, this is not complex but requires conscientious discipline.

Every committee should prepare their own budget. Because committee members are assigned specific tasks they are best able to estimate expenses that apply to that function. The finance committee uses all of these committee budgets to prepare a complete budget for the entire event.

One of the most important financial controls for the event will be signing authority. Virtually everything should be paid by a cheque requiring two signatures. The chairperson of the finance committee should approve and sign every cheque. The other signing authority could be the individual committee chairperson. It should be made very clear to committee and committee members that payment will not be made for any expenditure unless authorized by the finance chairperson. Such financial control is essential as directors can be personally liable for debts if gross negligence can be proven.

• Revenue Sources for the Event

One thing that all events have in common is that they cost money to put on. If one of the objectives is to raise money for the organization through an event, then it will be important to explore every revenue source available. On the other hand, if this is not a prime consideration it will be important to ensure that the event does not end up as a net loss for the organization.

There are a number of ways to raise money for an event; admission fees, the sale of food and beverages at the event, sponsorship, grants, paid advertising, or donations-in-kind. Most events explore every possible revenue source. The following are some of the principle methods from which to raise revenue for an event.

- **Admission Fees**

Many events charge admission or sell tickets for the event. In some cases, this can be a major source of income. This is usually the case if there is entertainment at the event such as a professional entertainer. In other cases, admission revenue for an event will be a small component of overall revenue. For example, a fair generates most of its revenue from concessions, rides and other entertainment; not from gate admission.

For events themed around providing public entertainment where admission revenue is to be a major source of income, organizers should be aware that there is more involved than simply collecting money at the door. A ticket policy has to be established. It is a good idea to charge everyone who enters. A children free policy can lead to arguments at the gate and frustration over admissions - "Sorry but your son looks 18 years old to me" - "He is not, he is only 11 and your policy is that children are admitted free." **It is important to ensure that proper security is provided to enforce ticket and admission policies.** This has a lot to do with the type of facility housing the event - whether it is in an open field or a building. Unfortunately, people will find the most ingenious methods to gain free entry to an event.

For a large entertainment event, tickets should be sold well in advance. This can be done in conjunction with a press conference held to announce the event. If this is done, the money can be used to cover many costs which are to be paid long before the event is held. Often musical events or festivals require "up front" money before entertainers will commit themselves.

Tickets for some events are on sale up to a year before the performances. This allows out-of-town visitors to make arrangements to travel to the event as well as allowing organizers to generate interest in attending long before the event.

Some organizers have found interesting ways to encourage a vigorous ticket sales campaign. For example, passes to the event are sold directly to organizers, members and businesses who must in turn sell them to the public or absorb some of the loss. This encourages the participants to sell as many tickets as possible. It also involves a whole network of people who are publicizing the event.

- **Participant Fees**

Many events are organized for the benefit of the participant as well as the visitor. Particularly in cases where the participants benefit financially from the event, a participant fee should be charged to offset the costs of the event. Examples include industry or business events allowing for the sales, display and advertising of products. Craft fairs and agriculture shows are other kinds of events where participant fees are charged. When these fees are charged in advance they greatly assist budgeting for the event.

- **Local and Corporate Sponsors**

In some cases, there may be good potential for corporate sponsors to be identified with the event. For example, a major agricultural event may find that chemical companies, farm machinery companies and financial institutions may wish to be identified with the event through sponsorship. Sponsorship fees can run anywhere from $200 to $15,000 depending on the size of the event and exposure that the sponsor receives.

Local sponsorship can also be a revenue source. In some cases, local sponsors merely contribute money out of goodwill. If a charitable organization is organizing the event, an official tax receipt can be an advantage to obtaining local sponsorship from businesses. The event could be held in association with local merchants, particularly if the event results in sales for them. If visitors to the event are also staying in local hotels and spending money in local restaurants and stores, then a convincing case can be presented for obtaining local sponsorship.

It is important that when a fund raiser approaches local businesses and individuals for financial contributions that they be really well informed about the benefits of the event. If the fund raiser is enthusiastic about the event, he/she will be much better at passing on that enthusiasm to potential sponsors.

When approaching a potential sponsor, organizations should be specific about what they want. Identify the advantages of sponsorship with the organization. Outline the benefits and form of sponsorship such as "patron of the day", displays on the program and specific recognition at the event. Marketing assistance may be available to promote the event to markets beyond the local one.

Planning and Organization of the Program

The people on the program committee have one of the hardest jobs. They are responsible for the design and coordination of the event itself. The committee is responsible for every detail of the event including the scheduling, timing, production and total performance of events. If the event is a competition, the committee will also be responsible for contest rules and judging.

It doesn't matter what the event is: the when and where and how aspect of every sub-event (activities) on the program must be worked out in detail. Here's a list of the kinds of things the program committee must do:

- Decide what activities are to take place. Will there be one or many? What will they be?
- Plan the timing of activities. Could we conduct more than one activity at the same time? Which ones? Be sure participants do not have to be in two places at once.
- Make sure that activities do not conflict with others while ensuring that there are a variety of activities for everyone.
- Decide where each activity will take place. If you are having more than one activity at a time, where will they be held? Will participants be able to get from one activity to the next?
- Set the final program for the event and allow for contingencies.

The program committee is in essence the heart of the event. It will have a lot of work to do to make sure every detail of the program itself is taken care of. It may require the organization of sub-committees.

Marketing and Promotion

An excellent marketing program is essential to the success of any event especially one that is being conducted for the first time. It must not only inform the public, but arouse their interest and involvement in the project.

As a general rule of thumb you can expect to spend at least 15% of your total budget on the promotion of your event. In the case of a large event, you may want to consider hiring a professional media agency to work with your marketing committee.

The marketing committee should prepare a marketing plan for the event within a set budget. The plan and budget should be coordinated with the finance committee and board of directors.

The marketing plan should include a ticket sales strategy and media campaign well in advance of the event. For larger events, major stores can be approached to act as ticket agents. Depending upon your budget various types of media can be used to promote the event. These can include:

- Radio
- Television
- Posters/Billboards
- Trade Publications

One of the best vehicles for promoting an event is word-of-mouth. If you have a large organization, involve as many members as possible in ticket sales and in "spreading the word" about the event.

Facility Requirements

When the curtain goes up at the beginning of a performance the audience doesn't usually concern themselves with details like sound systems, lighting and the construction of props. But, the dedicated people on the facilities committee must. This committee must make sure that the event will have the proper facilities and that they will be available and ready for occupation at the time that the event is scheduled. It is important to determine what the facility requirements are - can the event be held outdoors, is security important, washrooms, are there kitchen/cooking facilities, what is the actual square footage requirement and are stage and sound systems required?

The members of this group are responsible for all tasks associated with the physical location of the event. This includes both on-site and off-site facilities, provided that a separate committee has not been formed with the responsibility for the latter.

A few of the tasks to take into consideration are:

- Decoration
- Food sales on the grounds
- Parking - all aspects of transportation
- Security
- Ticket sales at the door/gate
- Usher services
- Technical services (power lines, lighting, etc.)
- Display set up
- Washrooms
- Garbage/litter disposal

Some of the tasks may require professional help. In some cases, power lines are needed to operate equipment or displays requiring a network of power lines to be laid down before the show begins. If this is the case, it is best of seek help from experts.

Chapter Four

Evaluation of the Event and Preparation for the Next Occasion

After the event is over and the crowds have gone home, the organizer's job is still not finished. There is the task of evaluating the success of the event and the planning of next year's show.

It's important for the event organizers to record their thoughts and ideas on the successes and failures of the event so that next year's committee can benefit from their experience.

The objectives for having the event will serve as a good set of criteria to begin the evaluation of the event.

Whether specifically stated as an objective or not, the ability of the event to generate a profit or cover its costs of operation will also be important as a criterion for evaluating the event's success. Financial statements comparing actual costs and revenues against budget estimates should be prepared. These statements will be useful to organizers the next time the event is to be scheduled.

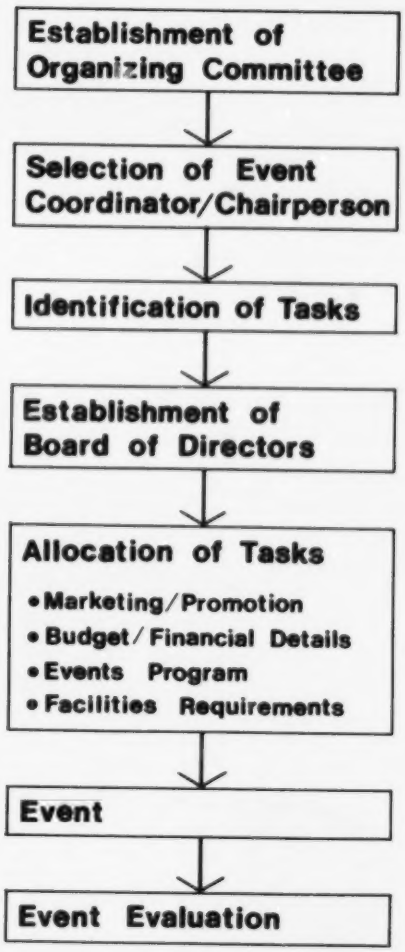
If possible, during the event a survey of attendants (either formally or informally) could prove to be a useful tool in evaluating the success of the event as well. The survey could provide valuable information on all aspects of the event including: its program, promotion, facilities, service staff, organization, markets, and fees.

Often the event organizers will put together a report on exactly how to plan the event down to the smallest detail after its first year of operation. Organizers in subsequent years will be able to use this report as a comprehensive guide in planning.

It is also a good idea to ask the event coordinator to prepare a report at the end of the event which summarizes planning of the event as well as any problems that may have been encountered.

Planning the next event may begin almost immediately after the current one is over and as a part of the reports from the organizers and the coordinator.

Detailed Planning/Organization



Chapter Five

Summary

Planing, organizing and evaluating an event involves a great deal of work and should be undertaken in a well-organized business-like manner. **The chances of success for the event are improved substantially if the broad planning and organizing framework presented in this booklet is followed.** The main steps in this process are:

- Initiate an event,
- Evaluate the organizational support behind it,
- Establish and priorize the objectives,
- Establish a theme,
- Introduce the event to a broader audience to obtain further input and support,
- Determine the event's feasibility,
- Establish an organizing committee with a coordinator, sub-committees, and board of directors,
- Establish budget details,
- Estimate revenue sources,
- Develop the program(s),
- Market and promote the event,
- Detail the facility requirements, and
- Evaluate it after it is over.

Careful attention to the above steps will make it that much easier to hold the event and possibly expand upon and improve on its success in subsequent years.

Recommended Readings and Other Sources

Saskatchewan Tourism and Small Business Publications

A Study to Determine the Impact of Events on Local Economies, 1984.

Saskatchewan Events 1985, a list of Saskatchewan events, their location and times.

The Great Saskatchewan Vacation Book, a tourism promotion booklet on events, attractions and things to do in Saskatchewan.

Tourism Business Development Guide, 1986.

Saskatchewan Culture and Recreation, and Saskatoon Folkfest Inc.

Planning the Cultural Event, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Developing a Theme for an Event, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Resource Planning (Budgeting), a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Revenue Strategies, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Planning a Market Strategy, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Basic Financial Accounting for a Special Event Sponsored by a Non-Profit Organization, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Protocol and Hospitality, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Media Relations, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Display, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Cash Management and Control, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Paid Advertising, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Audio Systems, a module in conjunction with a workshop program.

Some of the foregoing modules may not yet be published at the time of this booklet's publication, and therefore, may not be available. For more information on the status of these sources, please contact Saskatchewan Culture and Recreation.

Canadian Government Office Of Tourism

Planning Festivals and Events, 1982